

**THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE
PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:**

- 5 1. A seal assembly for a reciprocating shaft, comprising:
 a body having a bore;
 a shaft adapted to move reciprocally within the body
between an extended position extending from the body and a
retracted position retracted within the body;
- 10 at least one first circumferential seal positioned in
the body and circumscribing the shaft, the shaft having a
first seal travel area which is in contact with the first
seal during axial reciprocating movement of the shaft, at
least a portion of the first seal travel area extending
- 15 from the body where it is exposed to contaminants when the
shaft is in the extended position;
 at least one second circumferential seal positioned in
the body and circumscribing the shaft in axially spaced
relation to the first circumferential seal, the shaft
- 20 having a second seal travel area which is in contact with
the second seal during axial reciprocating movement of the
shaft, the second seal area remaining sheltered within the
body even when the shaft is in the extended position; and
 the first seal travel area and the second seal travel
- 25 area being axially spaced separate and distinct areas on
the shaft, such that damage to the exposed portion of the
first seal travel area leading to a failure of the at least
one first circumferential seal does not lead to failure of
the at least one second circumferential seal, as the second
- 30 circumferential seal engages the second seal travel area
which is separate and distinct from the first seal travel
area.
2. The seal assembly as defined in Claim 1, wherein the
- 35 shaft is a ram shaft of a blow out preventer.